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| **Counterargument** | Statistics |
| Examples | Emotional Language |
| Anecdotes | Working definitions |
| Comparison/Contrast | Rhetorical Questions |
| Cause and Effect | Variety of perspectives |
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Girls, Don’t Become Boy Scouts

Kate Tuttle, October 12, 2017, NYT

The news arrived on Oct 11, a day—as Facebook reminded us—designated as the International Day of the Girl. On the the surface, it even seemed like it might be a progressive change: The Boy Scouts of America announced that it would allow girls to participate in Cub Scouts and to eventually earn Eagle Scout rank.

The responses fell into the broadly predictable categories. Some applauded what they saw as a long-overdue opening of closed doors, along the lines of the January announcement that transgender boys could join scouting and the 2013 end to the ban on gay members. Others, mostly men, many of them former scouts, objected to what they saw as creeping political correctness, an incursion of unwanted female influence into an all-male bastion. On Fox News, Laura Ingraham attributed the change to a “small, radical group of gender-benders.”

But both sides seemed to agree that the shift in policy, whether they loved it or hated it, was essentially progressive. They’ve been had.

The Boy Scouts’ decision to open its ranks to girls appears to be less an evolution toward openness and inclusion than a calculated business strategy. The move allows the organization, which has been rocked by revelations of decades of sexual abuse, to improve its public image. It opens up a broad new market with the promise of increased revenue, an attractive proposition for a nonprofit that has seen both membership rolls and corporate sponsorships shrink in recent years. Most crucially, it’s a direct attack on the Girl Scouts, a group that shares some historical roots with the Boy Scouts but has grown into a very different organization, with very different values.

Unlike the Boy Scouts, in which individual troops are overwhelmingly affiliated with churches—a large share are tied to conservative denominations; an estimated 20 percent of scouts are Mormon, for instance—the Girl Scouts are a secular organization. While the Boy Scouts have an official policy against atheists and agnostics participating in scouting, the Girl Scouts make it clear that girls may substitute any words they like for the part of the Girl Scout Pledge in which they promise “to serve God.”

The Girl Scouts have long focused on social justice, diversity and inclusion in their activities. And as members of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, a global body, they have provided financial support to organizations like Oxfam, Amnesty International and Doctors Without Borders. Feminist icons routinely recall their Girl Scout days as a source of strength and confidence that launched them (35)into lives of purpose.

As a result, the Girl Scouts have become a sort of boogeyman for conservatives. In May of this year, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas announced it was cutting ties with the Girl Scouts, choosing instead to partner with American Heritage Girls, a right-leaning scouting group. Some anti-abortion organizations have even gone so far as to boycott the Girl Scouts’ trademark—and delicious—cookies.

In making this change, the Boy Scouts aren’t pursuing some kind of radical coed style of scouting. What has been lost in the discussion is that by all accounts, the plan wouldn’t so much let girls in as form separate girls’ wings—a sort of junior ladies’ auxiliary—for girls whose families shy away from the scary, liberal, feminist Girl Scouts. The Boy Scouts’ statement hints as much, promising that they want “to offer families an important additional choice in meeting the character development needs of all their children.” This sounds benevolent, until you remember that there already is an organization that helps girls develop character: the Girl Scouts.

We live in an era of fake news and strange bedfellows. While the Boy Scouts’ announcement is being spun as a courageous gesture toward gender equality, it’s more likely to further patriarchal goals. And it’s certainly surprising for me, a liberal feminist, to find myself agreeing with Donald Trump Jr., who expressed his dismay about the new policy—albeit for totally different reasons.

There are real conversations to be had about single-sex youth organizations, hard questions we ought to face about the role religion, race and class play in them as well. But this situation isn’t really all that complicated, at least not from the point of view of this former Brownie: There’s nothing progressive about trying to undercut a venerable organization that serves girls. And there’s nothing so cynical as a corporate strategy dressed up to look like empowerment.

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